

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 8 and 15 are amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Tsai during the August 17 personal interview are gratefully appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 2-6, 9-13 and 16-20 are allowable.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 7, 8, 14, 15 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Tsuyuki (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0107859). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed during the personal interview, Tsuyuki fails to disclose, suggest or render obvious an evaluation apparatus and associated method and computer program that includes a propagation information storage unit configured to store propagation information data including information messages to be propagated within a plurality of groups to be evaluated, as recited in independent claims 1, 8 and 15. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 8 and 15, and their dependent claims, are patentable over Tsuyuki. As such, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-21 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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